

IN
STORAGE

FINAL DAILY REPORT ON THE
EXPLORATORY ARCHEOLOGY PROJECT

at

FORT MOULTRIE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Stanley South
Archeologist

December 11 - 21, 1973

The Institute of Archeology and Anthropology
University of South Carolina

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Tuesday, December 11, 1973

The weather was so cold and windy that we could not work outside in the morning so we cut firewood for the fireplace by turns, and sat by the fire and worked on correspondence, reports, notes, etc.

After lunch we used the backhoe to cut more trenches and connected the pumps and lowered the water table so we could see what we had in the bottom of the five to six foot deep slots. We have to cut a central deep trench with a three foot deep trench on each side so we can prevent cave-ins. We found three ditches in the bottom of our trench and took some transit shots on them. In cutting the new length of the trench we found six artillery shells with fuses still in place. Cleaned these off and took photographs and measurements, then called the Navy Ordnance squad to take possession of them to blow them up. We asked that they save any fragments or any shells that did not blow up and return them to us so Bill could use them in his museum.⁷ However, since they have their own ordnance museum it is doubtful that we will ever see anything of the shells again.

Who's museum?
NDS 7

Wednesday, December 12, 1973

Worked again on the hole to the south of the present fort trying to get well points down so we can take the backhoe cut deeper. However, tried four times but could not find a place where would not hit bricks at a deeper depth. There is something down there, probably ruins of the second fort, and we will keep on working on this hole until we get the water down and see what the rubble is. Perhaps it is the well area we are looking for after all. Just before lunch we got a well point down and now will hook up the pump. We worked on the trench 90 where we found the ditches, and had the backhoe follow the line of them toward the north to see where they go. Our plotting of these ditches yesterday indicated that they are at a 90° angle to the ditch we already have north of the fort. We took photographs of the profile above these ditches, and examined them more closely, and they appear at present to be depressions caused by some heavy object lying in place on the surface of the sand at this depth. One appears to be a true ditch, and we are having the backhoe cut a new slot to try to see how long it is. We are hoping this is part of the fort, but cannot tell as yet. We do have eighteenth century ceramics in association with the thing, but not much. This afternoon we will continue to check out these ditches. Received a copy of the latest "archeological" interpretation from John Garner by way of George Fischer. John says the ditch we found on the north side of the fort may be one dug to receive garbage as per an order dated 1779 which he found reference to. This interesting reference indicates that the filth was to be buried outside the abattis, and John suggests that this reference could serve to explain the relationship of the debris-filled ditch with the ditch we have found. I agree that this reference is certainly one to be used in interpreting the ditch we have found, but I do not agree that this is a special ditch, or that it is not "plausible" that the soldiers would throw debris into their own ditch. This is more the rule than the exception, with fort ditches being the most popular place for disposal of trash, from the forts I have excavated and those excavated by other archeologists. However, I agree with John that the abattis we found (the northward sloping palisade line) may well be part of the original fort, since it parallels the ditch along its entire length. However, there was a definite intrusion of this palisade line into eighteenth century trash, but this can be explained by the reference to Charles Lee's orders regarding an abattis, which was some time after the fort had been used, I believe. At any rate, the 90° angle of the new ditch to this debris-filled ditch suggests that the new ditch is a later addition.

Wednesday, December 12, 1973, (Continued P.M.)

Cut a profile of the ditch we found running northeast and southwest in trench 91, and found that a timber one foot broad and one foot thick was in the ditch. There is absolutely no association with anything other than creamware of the Revolutionary War period in this feature. The profile indicates that the timber was placed in position before any of the layers of the profile were washed into place. One brick was still in position on this timber, perhaps indicating a brick wall was placed on the timber. The size of the thing would also indicate this. Several whole bricks were found beside the timber in the ditch fill. We cut another backhoe trench to the south trying to see how far it went in this direction, but failed to probe the timber. Tomorrow we will examine the contents of this trench, as well as checking further the east end of the slot in which the ditch with the timber was found. I checked with Mr. Rowells who is chairman of the streets commission of the city of Sullivan's Island, about cutting a backhoe cut on the city property, and he said he would give us his permission, so we will do this tomorrow to follow the timber and ditch toward the north. We will also try to follow its course to the south to see where it goes, turns, etc.

Travis and Everette worked on putting in more well points in the area of the second fort hole to the south of the present fort, and had quite a bit of trouble getting them down and pumping water. Hopefully now they have done this and are ready to pump and use the backhoe in that area on Friday. Bob Stephenson called today and said he needed me in Columbia on Friday for an important meeting, so I will leave Mike and the crew in charge to carry on, which they can do o.k. for Friday. I will return early Monday for more digging before we begin to break camp on the 20th and 21st, plus backfilling, etc.

Thursday, December 13, 1973

We continued working on the main trench in which we found the big timber in the depression, and I had the backhoe cut a trench on Sullivan's Island property to the north of the chain fence to see if the timber continues there also. Found a ditch or disturbance to the east of the timber, and while we were waiting for the water to be pumped down so we could examine it more fully I had the backhoe cut another short trench to the north of the area, just south of the chain fence. Here we put in a well point, with Travis and Everette getting soaked in the process, and after it was pumped down Mike Hartley cleaned it off with John Prescott's help, and a ditch outline was seen. When we looked into it at a greater depth we found that this ditch also had a big one foot square timber in place running parallel to the first one we found. We jumped to the main trench 90 and put a good cleaning on the proper area and found the timber here also, crossing the trench and going toward the south. The distance between these timbers is 24.7 feet, about right for the width of the parapet and platform for the first fort. I had the backhoe cut another trench to the south of the old trench 90, and hoped to reveal the westernmost timber again, but probing did not reveal it at first probe. Just before lunch, however, I jumped in the trench and began probing again, and found that there was a timber in the trench, but running at a different angle, east and west, not north and south as the previous parallel timbers were running. I felt beneath the foot of water, and could feel the grain line of the wood and the edge of the timber. It appears that the line of this timber is at an obtuse angle to the other timbers, which is great news since such an angle almost surely indicates a fort feature. I gave Mike orders to follow this timber and see how it relates to

Thursday, December 13, 1973, Continued

the timbers we already have. It surely looks like we have found part of the fort on this side of the present fort, that aligns with the fort ditch we have found on the other side of the (front) of the present fort,

However, we will have to take more transit shots, and plot the results to see just how it relates to what we have found already. From the present data it appears that the ditch we found to the north of the fort is part of the curtain wall ditch and not part of the bastion as we have thought until now. This would place the fort on a diagonal angle to the present fort and would place the northeast bastion (the one with the powder magazine) in the area where we are now digging. We will have to work on the area some more and find more of this part of the fort to be sure, but it certainly looks like that is what we have found.

P.M. I left for Columbia leaving Mike in charge. Everette and Travis worked on pumping the area directly over the cribs shown on the early maps trying to get the water down, and found that three well points had to be sunk, and still the water would not lower. They dug exploratory holes here (in the 2nd fort exploratory hole) and found stone or mortared brick at a deeper level, but the water must be lowered before we can get down to look at it, and this is a major problem out here on the front.

Mike had the backhoe cut a slot above the southern most end of the timber to the west and found that it stopped after only six.5 feet from the angled notch we had seen in the timber in trench 90, and had photographed and recorded. This notch is running at an angle to the alignment of the timber, and may represent where another timber was attached to it at some time in the past, but now there is not a timber in the notch. We may find that this notch has some significance later.

Friday, December 14, 1973

I worked on correspondence in the office in Columbia, and brought people there up to date on the discoveries, the finding of the timbers from the first fort, etc. Mike cut a new trench and found the timber again, and also measured the distance from the southern (east-west) timber and found that it is 24.5 feet from the notch in the west (north-south) timber, which gives us an obtuse angle of timbers almost 25 feet apart. I called Mike from Columbia and he gave me this news, which was good to hear since it now looks like that this angle of timbers is definitely part of the original parapet and platform base of the fort. The timber had been taken from the notch in the north-south timber, but it was at the same distance as the east timber is from the west timber. On paper it should make a fine angle, but will not plot it, of course until next week.

Saturday, December 15, 1973

I found that I had a strept throat and stayed in bed most of the day under medication, but thought about the timbers in the trenches all day and night. Went to a party at Bob Stephenson's at night, and had a good time with John and Jean Combes in my wine cellar later.

Sunday, December 16, 1973

Worked most of the day on reviewing the National Park Service report on the archeological work at Fort Toulouse, Alabama, which was a good report compared with some I have seen. At least he paid attention to context and provenience. I gave in in the meeting on Friday to admonitions and entreaties for me to go to the meeting in Oakland, so will go by train.

Monday, December 17, 1973

Returned to the site at an early hour, leaving Columbia at 5 a.m. with snow on the ground and houses. No snow at Sullivan's Island, however, but cold and windy, with a chill factor of near zero it felt like. We avoided the pumos except for the hole to check the ballast and granite blocks etc. in the hole to the south of the present fort. We are still involved in pumping it down and hope to get the backhoe away long enough to dig down and see what is down at the deeper levels. We dug today, under Everettes direction, down to the level of over seven feet, and were just beginning to touch the top of the rubble of granite blocks forming the top of a jetty or crib to prevent the present fort from washing away. We will go deeper tomorrow if pumping, weather etc. will allow. We surely are spending time on this hole, but the Park Service needs this data on the rubble, cribbing, or well or whatever may be down there, so we are trying to take the water table down deep enough to get at something that may be down there.

In spite of the weather today was an exciting day. We chased the timber lines and found the predicted turn toward the south and shot transit on the various places we saw it, and now have two angles on the east side of the northeast bastion of the fort, plus a short run on the curtain wall. Travis and Ken went to survey sites with Richard Kimmel since we did not need everyone out on the site today to freeze to death working with the backhoe and feeling below the water level to locate the timbers. We find that the timber level is eighteen inches below water level, so most of our locating today was done underwater, but we could still take transit shots on the exact edge using the probe to locate the edge and our hands to feel it, etc., so this worked out well. Late in the afternoon we began having the backhoe cut a final trench just to the south of the chain fence to attempt to locate timbers on the west wall of the northeast bastion, but at quitting time we had not found one. Tomorrow may reveal the first of these on the east side, at least we hope so.

Bill Harris came by and we talked about his and John Garner's view that the ditch with the rubble is probably not part of the fort. It may well be when the fort is completely excavated, or at least when more is known than we now know about the details, that the ditch may prove to be one especially dug for disposal of garbage. However, I think that it is a standard fort ditch outside the abattis, filled with the expected garbage. In this case we also have the fine reference John came up with that helps us fix the time etc. relative to it, but I think the reference has application to being interpreted as referring to the trash being buried in the fort ditch outside the abattis. I was also glad to learn something from Bill about the codes used on the Park Service correspondence. I did not know that, as with the Watergate Plumbers, et. al., the individuals in the Park Service also have code names, and had assumed Garner's statement was a Park Service position when actually it was a communication between Garner and Bearss. Such is the penalty for being ignorant of the coded ways of the Government, fortunately I am still an outsider and as such merely go by my name I have always had. I suppose the Park Service has reasons for such reduction of individuals to mysterious code names, probably providing an aura of officialdom to each

Monday, December 17, 1973 (Continued)

Bill says that a project may be designed whereby some small amount of work may be outlined for the north of the street, with more work to search for more of these timbers and related data to the east and toward the south as indicated by the timbers we now have. He says that if such a project comes about

that they may want to put more money into locating more of it, which I agree would be a valid goal. For instance we could follow the big timbers toward the south as far as possible, but already he says, the thinking is that we will not find anything because the low tide has already taken what is there. I thought this was likely to be the case myself for awhile, but now that we have seen that the data we are after is seven feet deep, below the hurricane floods, we may well be rewarded by chasing the big timbers toward the south to see how far they can be followed.

With the northeast bastion we now are finding located, I think we can more accurately superimpose the shape of the first fort over the present fort map and have a better idea of the exact location of the southeast bastion that is of such interest. The major change so far is that the fort ditch we have found to the north is apparently part of the curtain wall, and not the near-by northwest bastion wall as previously interpreted. Our three week extension has allowed us to more accurately pinpoint the relationship of this ditch and the position of the fort to the present fort, just as I had proposed in my progress report proposal, wherein I suggested a period of further examination to the east of the fort to pinpoint the data we had, and to verify the location of the northeast or southeast bastion. As it turns out we apparently have the northeast instead of the southeast bastion, and the fort is oriented at a greater angle to the present fort than we had conjectured based on our previous interpretation of the archeological data of the fort ditch. Our map now will apparently show the southeast bastion much further to the south than we had previously indicated, a point Garner has made several times (though on the basis of Bowman jetty and other data and not on the realities of the archeological data). I am glad the beginning of my summer proposal was tacked onto the end of this project since it allowed us to now know a more accurate picture than would have emerged had we not gone into this phase of the project at this time. This should give us more time to plan for further archeological work, and for the Park Service to find the kind of historical archeologist they want for the execution of the project. My report on this exploratory phase of the project should be a help toward making such plans for a more involved project if funds are made available. I will get my exploratory archeology map to the various involved people by January first as required, and the report by June 30th, as required, and that should finish this project and the rebuilding of the bastion for the "bicentennial rush can begin. However, I still maintain that detailed Phase 3 archeology should be done on the site before hand, not merely exploratory archeology such as we have done here, but apparently no funds are available for more than perhaps a small amount of further exploratory work. At least we have found the fort of 1776, which was our goal in this first exploratory project, and the extension of the time period by three weeks has allowed us to firmly fix the position of the first fort, (at least this is what we see at this moment, and unless discoveries of tomorrow change this situation). However, even if we superimpose the shape of the first fort over the northeast bastion and the part of the north curtain wall that we have, we will need to locate specifically the southeast bastion if possible, and this will, no doubt, be a primary goal of the next exploratory project by the next archeologist, provided such a project gets underway.

I got the crew together today and thanked them for a fine season, for their fine work, and for being the finest all around crew I have had the pleasure of working with. I then, since I had a captive audience, regaled them with a rendition of my poems "Heretical Thoughts for the Christmas Season" and gave them a copy, as well as copies of my Christmas poem for this year.

Tuesday, December 18, 1973

Very cold morning! Down to 26°. Some of the crew stayed in, but Everett and I went to the site and got the backhoe going. We cannot seem to find the big timbers in this trench south of the chain fence, but did find an oyster shell ditch or deposit. Because of this we are well pointing again, in spite of the water, getting wet at that temperature, getting feet wet, getting sprayed from jetting down the points, etc., but we need to lower the water and see why we are not getting the timbers. Perhaps they have been removed from their ditch as seen with one of them previously, but only a clean cut of the soil will reveal any disturbance of that sort, so we must lower the water to reveal any such ditches, etc. Also we want to see the oyster shell filled ditch or feature we have seen in this trench.

I had a long talk with Bill Harris again about the prospect of another project, and I expressed the hope that the goals could be spelled out so that horses would not be changed in the middle of the stream or in middle-contract. Right now I am skeptical that a simple contract simply fulfilled through scientific archeology free of political and other pressures is possible, but my skepticism may not be totally warranted. However, this project is a good example, I suppose, of a typical Park Service approach, and I would suggest therefore, a tight study of the goals, etc. before any agreement is reached. I think this would be a fine project for Dick Carrillo, Everett Baker, or some young archeologist to undertake while I am writing my report on this project so it will be ready by June first, or 30th, or whenever it is due.

Red Evans called today for an appointment this afternoon to have an interview on the completion of the project. Mrs. Geraldine Cassidy interviewed me yesterday on the project, the second such interview. The other one was with Mr. Hamrick of The State, in which paper the only article on the excavation since the discovery of the fort was printed this past Thursday. It is interesting to note that at the beginning of the project we were told that when the fort was found we were to remain quiet and not say anything to the press so that it could be announced through the office of the U.S. Senators, etc., etc., but when the fort was found the Park Service has remained as quiet as the tomb to the press regarding the discovery of the fort. I think that the Institute should not again agree to sublimate its professional activities to the whims of the political pressures that may govern the Park Service. If such a cover-up of archeological discoveries is a standard part of Park Service contracts I suggest we not sign contracts with such a secretive. The Institute operates free and above-board, and I prefer to see us to continue to do so, without the need for confining restrictions of government. Our own professional integrity and ethical standards should, I think, continue to guide us.

The interview went off well with Red Evans of Channel 2. We did not find the timbers in the long trench south of the chain fence, but did find an oyster shell filled ditch. We cut two slots in an attempt to follow the big timbers to the south down the run of the curtain wall, but so far we have not hit them in our trench 100 feet toward the south. Bill may well have been correct in suggesting that the rip tides in this southward area may have destroyed any timbers etc. in this area. We will now follow the timber we have toward the south and see where it ends.

Travis went to Columbia today to get the truck to begin the big job of packing the artifacts, etc. and taking them to Columbia to the laboratory to be processed. With this cold weather here at Fort Moultrie I think it is about time we cut out. We have gained enough data to position the fort, though, as always, we wish we could have done more. One factor here, however, has been the five to seven foot depth we had to go, plus the 18" depth below water, which caused slower progress than we might otherwise have been able to make on a site with only eight inches of plowed soil to be removed, for example.

Wednesday, December 19, 1973

Worked with backhoe in the area north of the chain fence to determine how far the big timber goes in this direction, and to hopefully get an angle. Plotted the data shot so far and it surely does make a bastion, the northeast one. However, with the timbers not located on the west side that side will still have to be conjectured based on the angles we have found. We chased the timber to the south along the curtain wall but found that it gave out in a snag end at the edge of the old beach line. It appears that Bill Harris was entirely correct in his conjecture that toward the south the fort data will have been destroyed by the sea. "Swallowed by the sea" is as good a phrase as any for this south side of the fort, including the southeast bastion. We cut a trench 100 feet to the south along the curtain wall and found no sign of anything at the proper depth, and deeper. The humus profile we see in the area of the northeast bastion is missing here, with no palmetto log chips, etc. as we see in the area of the northeast bastion. No occupation humus is seen at all very far south of the sidewalk from Jasper to Moultrie, which clearly indicates that the ocean did indeed swallow the fort in this area. Thus a project to reveal the southeast bastion would be a disappointing one.

We awoke to a very cold morning and Mike worked with the backhoe while others began packing the truck. We had another interview with Mrs. Cassidy in the morning, and in the afternoon the first truck load was taken to Columbia and unloaded. Everette Baker will take the truck back tomorrow for a second final trip. Everette worked with the backhoe on the trench to find the wells.

Thursday, December 20, 1973

Worked on cleaning and securing the house. Loaded the final truck load for Columbia, turned keys over to Bill Harris. Talked with Mr. Hazelhurst about securing the house for winter. The backhoe worked on backfilling some of the holes.

Friday, December 21, 1973

Mr. Richardson worked on finishing the final backhoe backfilling of the site to close out the dig.

The project has been a successful one from an archeological point of view since we had the challenge of finding the first fort remains, determining their nature, drafting a map of the first fort in relation to the present fort, and making recommendations for future work. This we have done and will do in the final progress report to be written over the Christmas holidays.

We have had the finest cooperation from Bill Harris at the fort, and great interest in our goings on by John Garner and Ed Bearss, both of whom have continued research throughout the period of the expedition. John has come up with some interesting and useful new references, and has made some interpretations of his own, often very correct ones, with the points of disagreement being relatively minor ones. Our main problem here has been the pressure to dig the second fort area when our primary challenge was to dig the first fort, which we insisted on doing, and which we did. As it turns out excavation to the south of the present fort would have produced nothing of the first fort since the sea has indeed swallowed the data in this forward area. John Garner was, it appears now, correct in stating that a bastion of the first fort might be found in the area of the Bowman Jetty #5?

Friday, December 21, 1973 (Continued)

not for the right reasons. His reasons were based on the 1966 reenactment photo data, and on Bowman's sighting of a brick fort remains. Our excavation has indicated that bricks were indeed a part of the original fort, but it has also not revealed any evidence for such bricks being still in place anywhere in the area we have examined. The chances of anything remaining in the forward area of Bowman's jetty are extremely slim in view of what we have found in the area of the northeast bastion. We have, interestingly enough, found that the southeast bastion was in the area of where Bowman saw something, not the southwest bastion as suggested by John Garner.

I suppose the biggest disappointment from a Park Service point of view in this project will be our not finding the wonderful wells of the second fort, but our contract just did not specify that this was to be the major data objective that it apparently came to be. Perhaps a separate contract can some day be written with this as the primary objective, and then these wells can be found and the relics they supposedly contain can be recovered.

The shape of the northeast bastion is remarkably like the bastions shown on the original map of the first fort (not the later bastions "traced" from this first map). The first map reveals that the fort was not a true square, and this was apparently not just poor draftsmanship. With the position of the northeast bastion now known, the location of the remains of the powder magazine could be undertaken as a future project. As discussed some days ago a new project to do this, and to explore further this northeast area, and to specifically study the area south of the northeast bastion relative to soil layers, palmetto filled chip layer, timber elevations, etc. could well be undertaken and more data recovered. However, details as to construction of the palmetto log parapets, platforms, etc. beyond a purely locational, size, shape, point of view will not likely be recovered. The Powder Magazine may be in the form of a brick ruin, or timber, but this again, would be a ground plan data recovery project only. Such a project would make an excellent one for a young archeologist like Mike Hartley as a first dig project, and Mike could handle it I think as far as the logistics are concerned. In fact there is a general feeling here in the air that all that one needs anyway is a backhoe operator such as Mr. Richardson, and an historian with a reference in his hand. In terms of future development for historical interpretation in the form of on-site explanatory exhibits, I now suggest that focus be on the northeast bastion and powder magazine. Such an exhibit would place the interpretive statement beside the present fort, and not far forward where it would be outside the main traffic flow of visitors and exposed to future hurricane assault. One suggestion made by Mike Hartley was to possibly place large hewn timbers such as we have found in the exact spot on the surface where they are below, and let this be the statement for the shape of the northeast bastion, and these could be the focus for a small field exhibit with a map, drawing, photographs, etc. on the first fort. This makes more sense to me than rebuilding the entire southeast bastion without archeological data as to its exact location or shape (though we now know where within a few feet that it would have been, and its orientation). If, however, a palmetto bastion is desired, I would suggest the magazine bastion above the exact spot where it was found. Though I understand there is actually not that much interest in the first fort anyway in financial terms, with all the funds from the present appropriation of $1\frac{1}{4}$ million going for a visitor center and boat dock and work on the third fort. I think John Garner, Bill Harris, Ed Bearss, Pete Faust and George Fischer and others who have continued to insist that some data on the first fort does need to be in hand before interpretation begins are to be commended for taking this attitude in the face of little financial base to undertake a competent full-scale archeological project such as spelled out in my recent progress report. The work we have done

in this project should be a good beginning toward designing explanatory exhibits that will have much greater accuracy and historical authenticity than would ever have been the case had this exploratory archeology project not been undertaken.

Working with the Park Service has been a most interesting and revealing experience on this contract. I was glad to be exposed to the Park Service way of doing things typified by this project, and particularly valuable from an archeological point of view was the learning challenge presented by recovering data from depths of 4 to 7 feet beneath 18 inches of water. The experience with the Park Service approach to research and interpretation has been one I will not soon forget.
